(c) whether there is any proposal to extend this facility in Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Jan Shatabdi Express trains; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Heart patients are granted concession when called by recognized hospitals for heart surgery. Cancer and thalassemia patients are granted concession for treatment and periodical check up. The element of concession is 75% in second, Sleeper, First, AC Chair Car & AC 3-tier and 50% in AC 2-tier and AC First Class basic mail/express fares. Concession is granted on production of the requisite certificate from recognized hospitals. One escort with each patient is also granted same concession.

(c) No. Sir.

(d) Due to financial constraints, concession is not granted in Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Jan Shatabdi trains.

Transportation of cement to NER

3839. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that NER required 125 to 150 rakes of cement every month from October to May in a year for construction and development works under Central/State Government/Local Bodies/Private Schemes since NER is dependent on other States for getting cement and mode of transport is railway only;

(b) if so, what steps Railways have taken to provide cement rakes to NER from various Railway Zones; and

(c) what Government have released and planned for allotment of cement rakes to NER from different Railway Zones during the period from October, 2002 to May, 2003?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA) : (a) No, Sir. However, Railways are meeting requirements of essential commodities including cement in North-Eastern Region and their input by Railways in the region is regularly monitored.

(b) and (c) During 2001-02, Railways have transported 1061 thousand tonnes of cement to North-Eastern Region. While in the year 2002-03, 1277 thousand tonnes of cement have been transported to North-Eastern Region. There is an increase of 21.4%. During October-March 2002, transportation of cement to North-East was 495 thousand tonnes while in the corresponding period of the current financial year 648 thousand tonnes of cement have been transported to North-East region thus showing an incremental transportation of 30.9%. This trend of substantially increased transportation of essential commodities including cement to North-East region is continuing in the month of April, 2003.

Connecting of State Capitals with Rail lines in NE Region

3840. SHRI RISHANG KEISHING : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of rail lines which are meant to connect State Capitals in NE Region;

(b) State capitals linking rail line pending for construction; and

(c) the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA) : (a) to (c) The following three new line projects have already been included in the budget to provide connectivity to State capitals in the N.E. Region :

(i) Harmuti-Itanagar

(ii) Diphu-Karong as first phase of BG line to Imphal.

(iii) Kumarghat-Agartala